

38 ²³²⁹
The Fulness of the Mediator :

A
SERMON

PREACH'D

JUNE 15, 1736.

TO THE
SOCIETY

That SUPPORT the

Lord's-Day Evening Lecture,
near Devonshire-Square.

Publish'd at their REQUEST.

By JOHN GILL.

LONDON:

Printed for AARON WARD, at the *King's Arms* in
Little-Britain. MDCCLXXXVI. (Price Six-pence.)

The Editor of the Mediator :

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COL. i. 19.

*For it pleased the Father, that in him
should all Fulness dwell.*



THE Apostle, after his usual salutation to the church at Colosse, with a great deal of pleasure, takes notice of their faith in Christ, and love to all the Saints; puts up several petitions on their account, for an increase of spiritual knowledge, holiness, fruitfulness, patience and strength; gives thanks for some special blessings of grace he and they were partakers of; such as meetness for heaven, deliverance from the power of darkness, a translation into the kingdom of Christ, redemption through his blood, and the forgiveness of sins; and then takes an occasion to set forth the glories and excellencies of the person of Christ; *who,*

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he says, ver. 15. *is the image of the invisible God*, the natural, essential, eternal, increased, perfect and express image of his Father's person, whom no man hath seen at any time; and *the first-born of every creature*: Not that he was the first creature God made, which will not agree with the Apostle's reasoning in the next verse, *for by him were all things created*; and will be liable to this manifest contradiction, that he was the creator of himself; but the meaning is, either that he is the only begotten of the Father from all eternity, being the natural and eternal Son of God, who, as such, existed before any creature was brought into being; or that he is *the first parent*, or bringer forth of every creature; as the word will bear to be rendred, if, instead of *we go161ox@*, we read *we go1016x@*, which is no more than changing the place of the accent; and may be very easily ventured upon, seeing the accents were all added since the Apostle's days, and especially, seeing it makes his reasoning in the following verses appear with much more beauty, strength and force; he is the first parent of every creature, *for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities or powers; all things were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by*

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him all things consist. Next the Apostle proceeds to consider Christ in his office-relation, and mediatorial capacity; *and he is the head of the body the church*, even of the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, all the elect of God, over whom he is an head of dominion and power, and to whom he is an head of influence and supply; he adds, *who is the beginning*, both of the old and new creation, *the first-born from the dead*, who first rose from the dead by his own power to an immortal life, is set down at the right hand of God, has all judgment committed to him, *that in all things he might have the preeminence*; for which he is abundantly qualified, since it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell. The method I shall take in considering this passage of scripture will be this:

- I. To enquire what *fulness* of Christ is here intended.
- II. To give some account of the nature and properties of it.
- III. To shew in what sense it may be said to *dwell* in Christ.
- IV. To make it appear, that its dwelling in Christ is owing to the good-will and pleasure of the Father.

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I. I shall enquire what fulness of Christ is here intended; since the scriptures speak of more than one: And,

First, There is the personal fulness of Christ, or the fulness of the deity, which is said by our Apostle, in this same epistle^a, to dwell in him; *for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*. There is no perfection essential to deity, but is in him; nor is there any the Father has, but he has likewise. Eternity is peculiar to the Godhead: Christ was not only before Abraham, but before Adam, yea, before any creature existed; he is the *alpha* and *omega*, the *first* and the *last*, the *beginning* and the *ending*, which is, and which was, and which is to come^b; he is from everlasting to everlasting. Omnipotence, or a power of doing all things, can only be predicated of God. The works of creation, providence, redemption, the resurrection of the dead, with other things, in which Christ has been concerned, loudly proclaim him to be *the Almighty*. Omniscience, another perfection of deity, may easily be observed in Jesus Christ; *he needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man*^c; he is that living

^a Col. ii. 9.

^b Rev. i. 8.

^c John ii. 25.

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word of God, who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart; neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do, or to whom we must give an account^a; who in a short time will make all the churches, yea, all the world know, that he it is which searcheth the reins and hearts. Omnipresence and immensity are proper to God, and are to be found in Christ Jesus, who was in heaven at the same time he was here on earth; which he could not be, if he was not the omnipresent God, any more than he could make good the promises he has made, that he will be with his people when they meet in his name, and with his ministers unto the end of the world; nor could he be present with his churches in all places, as he certainly is; nor fill all things, as he certainly does. Immutability only belongs to God: Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever^c. In short, independence and necessary existence, which are essential to deity, are to be ascribed to him; for he is God of himself; Though as man and mediator, he has a life communicated to him from the Father; yet as God, he owes his being to none; it is not derived from another, he

^a Heb. iv. 12, 13. Rev. ii. 23. ^c Heb. xiii. 8.

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is over all, God blessed for ever, and must, therefore, be *the true God and eternal life*. If any perfection of deity was wanting in him, the fulness, all the fulness of it could not be said to dwell in him, nor he be said, as he is, to be *equal with God*. Now some think that this is the fulness designed in our text, and read it, *the fulness of the Godhead*, which seems to be transcribed from another passage in this epistle already mentioned; and suppose that this suits well with the Apostle's design in proving the primacy and preeminence of Christ over all things. But it should be observed, that the fulness of the deity possessed by the Son of God, does not depend on the Father's will and pleasure; but is what, as such, he naturally and necessarily enjoys by a participation of the same undivided nature and essence with the Father and Spirit; and therefore cannot be the fulness here intended.

Secondly, There is a relative fulness which belongs to Christ, and is no other than his body the church, of which he is head, who is call'd *the fulness of him that filleth all in all*; and for this reason, because she is filled by him. When all the elect are gathered, the fulness of the *Gentiles* brought in, and all *Israel* saved,

¹ Vid. Beza and Gomarus in loc. ² Eph. i. 23.

when

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when these are fill'd with all the gifts and grace of God designed for them, and are grown up to their just proportion in the body, and have attained to *the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, then will they strictly be, and may be truly call'd so. Some interpretersⁿ are of opinion, that this is the fulness here meant: But, though the church dwells in Christ, and he in her, and that through the good will and pleasure of the Father; and though she is compleat in Christ, and is said to be his fulness; yet, properly speaking, is not so yet, at least in such sense as she will be: Nor is she ever said to be *all fulness*, as in the text, and therefore cannot be here intended.

Thirdly, There is a fulness of fitness and abilities in Christ to discharge his work and office as mediator, which greatly lies in his being both God and man, or in the union of the two natures, divine and human, in one person. Hereby he becomes abundantly qualified to be *the day's-man betwixt us*, able to lay his hand upon us both; or in other words, to be *the mediator between God and man*; to be both a *merciful and faithful high-priest*, in things pertaining to God, and to make reconciliation for the sins of the peopleⁱ: For being man, he had

ⁿ Vid. Beza and Gomarus in loc.

ⁱ Job ix. 33.

ⁱ Tim. ii. 5. Heb. ii. 17.

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somewhat to offer in sacrifice to God, and was thereby capable of making satisfaction in that nature which sinned, which the law and justice of God seem to have required, and also of conveying the blessings of grace procured by him to elect men; for which reason, he *took not on him the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham.* The holiness of Christ's human nature greatly fitted him to be an high-priest, advocate, and intercessor, and very often an emphasis is put upon this in the sacred writings; as when he is said^k *to take away sin, and in him is no sin*, to offer up himself *without spot* to God, and we are said to be redeemed by the blood of Christ, *as of a lamb without spot and blemish*: And, indeed, such a redeemer is proper for us, such an advocate suits us, who is Jesus Christ *the righteous*; such an high-priest *became us*, is every way fit for us, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.* Being God as well as man, there is a sufficient virtue in all his actions and sufferings to answer what they were designed for; in his blood to cleanse from all sin, in his righteousness to justify from it, and in his sacrifice to expiate and atone for it. Being the mighty God, he could travel in the greatness of his strength, draw

^k 1 John iii. 5. Heb. ix. 14. 1 Pet. i. 19.

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nigh to God for us, offer up himself to God, bear our sins, and all the punishment due unto them, without failing or being discouraged; his own arm alone was capable of bringing salvation to himself and us; there is nothing wanting in him, to make him a compleat Saviour of the body and head of the church. Now, this may be taken into the sense of our text, yet is not the whole of it: For,

Fourthly, There is a dispensatory, communicative fulness, which is of the Father's good will and pleasure, put into the hands of Christ, to be distributed unto others: And this is principally design'd here, and is,

1. A fulness of nature. Christ is the head of *every* man, and the head over *all things* to the church; God has appointed him *heir of all things* even in nature: The light of nature is in him and from him; and he is *the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world*¹: The things of nature are all with him, and at his disposal; *the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof*^m; and he gives it to his chosen and special people in a peculiar manner: The blessings of nature are Wisdom's left-hand blessings, as those of

¹ John i. 9.

^m Psal. xxiv. 1.

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grace are her right-hand ones: *The world, and they that dwell therein*, are his, even the men of the world; the wicked part of the world are, in some sense, given unto him, to be subservient to the ends of his mediatorial kingdom and glory. *Ask of me*, says the Father to himⁿ, *and I shall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession*, which can't be understood of the chosen vessels of salvation; since it follows, *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron, thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel*.

2. A fulness of grace. Christ is said^s to be *full of grace and truth*; and it is of this fulness that the believer receives, *and grace for grace*, a sort of a fulness out of it, all kind of grace, every measure, and every supply of it.

(1.) There is a fulness of the spirit of grace, and of the gifts of the spirit in Christ: For he is *the lamb in the midst of the throne, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God*^p; not seven distinct personal subsistencies; but the phrase designs the one blessed spirit of God, and the perfection of his gifts

ⁿ Psal. ii. 8, 9.

^p John i. 14, 16.

^s Rev. v. 6.

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and grace, signified by the number *seven*, which, in the most enlarged sense, dwell in Christ; *the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord*^a rest upon him; he is *anointed with the oil of gladness*, the Holy Ghost, *above his fellows*, any of the sons of men, who are made partakers of his grace and glory; *for God giveth not the spirit by measure to him*^r. All those extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, with which the Apostles were filled on the day of *Pentecost*, were given from Christ, as the head of the church; who, when he ascended to heaven to fill all things, received gifts for men, and gave them to them, to qualify them for extraordinary work and service; And he has been in all ages since, more or less, bestowing gifts on men, to fit them for *the work of the ministry*, and for *the edifying of his body the church*, and *the residue of the spirit* is with him.

(2.) There is a fulness of the blessings of grace in Christ. The covenant of grace is order'd in all things, as well as sure, it's full of all spiritual blessings. Now this covenant is made with Christ, it is in his hands, yea, he is the covenant itself; all the blessings of it are *upon the*

^a Isa. xi. 2. ^r 1 Cor. xii. 13. ^r Psal. xlv. 7. John iii. 34.

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head, and in the hands of our antitypical Joseph, even on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brethren; and therefore, if any are blessed with these blessings, they are blessed with them in heavenly places in Christ: And, indeed, in a very strange and surprising manner do they come from him to us, even through his being made a curse for us; for he was made a curse for us, that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through him: Particularly, there is in Christ a fulness of justifying, pardoning, adopting, and sanctifying grace.

There is a fulness of justifying grace in him. One part of his work and office, as mediator, was to bring in everlasting righteousness; a righteousness answerable to all the demands of law and justice, which should answer for his people in a time to come, and last for ever; such a righteousness he has wrought out and brought in, by which justice is satisfied, the law is magnified and made honourable, and with which God is well pleased: Whence he is truly called, *The Lord our righteousness*, and *the sun of righteousness*, from whom alone we have our justifying righteousness. Now this righteousness wrought out by the Son of God, is in him, and with him, as

^f Jer. xxiii. 6. Mal. iv. 2.

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the author and subject of it; and to him are sensible souls directed, to him they look, and to him they apply for it; and every one for themselves say, as their faith grows up, *surely, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*: From him they receive this *gift of righteousness*, and with it an *abundance of grace*, a flow, an overflow of it. As it was freely wrought out for them, 'tis freely imputed to them, and bestowed upon them, without any consideration of their works; and is so full and large, that it is sufficient for the justification of all the elect, and that from *all things*, from which they could not be justified in any other way.

There is also a fulness of pardoning grace in Christ. The covenant of grace has largely and fully provided for the forgiveness of the sins of all the Lord's people. One considerable branch of it is, *I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more* *. In consequence of this covenant, and the engagements of Christ in it, his blood has been *shed for many, for the remission of sins*. The issue of which is, that *in him we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace* ^u; which,

* Heb. viii. 12.

^u Matt. xxvi. 28. Eph. i. 7.

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as it is entirely free, the riches, the glory of grace and mercy, are eminently display'd in it, so it is large and abundant, full and compleat; for God, pursuant to the covenant of his grace, and looking upon the precious blood of his Son, forgives *all the trespasses* of his people, past, present, and to come: Through the man Christ Jesus is preached unto us, and bestowed upon us, the free and full forgiveness of our transgressions. This is the declaration of the gospel; and what makes it good news and glad tidings to sensible sinners, that *whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*

There is likewise a fulness of adopting grace in Christ. The blessing of the adoption of children springs originally from the love of the Father: *Behold, says the Apostle John^w, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.* Predestination to it is by, or through Jesus Christ: The enjoyment of it is greatly owing to the redemption which is in him; for he came to *redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons^x.* The right, the privilege, the liberty of becoming the sons of God, is actually given forth from Christ, to them that

^w 1 John. iii. 1.

^x Gal. iv. 5.

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receive him and believe in him; so that those who are the children of God, are openly and declaratively so *by Faith in Christ Jesus.*

Add to this, That there is a fulness of sanctifying grace in Christ. The whole stock and fund of the saints holiness is in Christ's hands; he is their *sanctification*, as well as their *righteousness*; it is of his fulness they receive one sort of grace, as well as another: All the holiness is derived to them from Christ, which they are made partakers of in life, and which is made perfect in the hour of death; for *without holiness*, even perfect holiness, *no man shall see the Lord*¹. In the first work of conversion, a large measure of sanctifying grace is given forth from Christ; when *the grace of our Lord is exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus*²: As he is *the author and finisher of faith*, he is the author and finisher of every other grace; every measure of it is owing to him, every supply of it is from him: There is a fulness of all grace in Christ, to supply all our wants, support our persons, and to carry us safely and comfortably through this wilderness: There is a fulness of light and life, of wisdom and knowledge, strength and ability,

¹ Heb. xii. 14.

² 1 Tim. i. 14.

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joy, peace, and comfort in him : All spiritual light is in him, and from him. As all that light which was scattered throughout the whole creation, was on the fourth day collected together, and put into the great luminary the sun, so all fulness of spiritual light dwells in Christ, *the Sun of righteousness*, from whom we receive all we have ; which by degrees grows, increases, and *shines more and more unto the perfect day* : All spiritual life is in him, with him is *the fountain* of it ; from him we have the living principle of grace, and by him it is maintained in us unto eternal life. In him *are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, and from him they are communicated to us. As in him is righteousness to justify us, so in him is *strength* to enable us to oppose every corruption, withstand every enemy, exercise every grace, and discharge every duty : Though we cannot do any thing of ourselves, and without him can do nothing ; yet through him strengthening us we can *do all things*. In a word, there is a full fountain, and a solid foundation of all spiritual peace, joy and comfort in Christ : *If there is any consolation* to be had any where, it is *in Christ* ; it arises from and is founded upon his person, blood, righteousness and sacrifice ; in a view of which a believer is sometimes filled with *joy unspeakable*,

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speakable, and full of glory: For as the sufferings of Christ, those which we suffer for Christ, abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ^a. There is a grace in Christ sufficient for us to bear us up under, and bear us through all the trials, exercises and afflictions of life, to make us fruitful in every good work, and to cause us to hold on and out unto the end. There is a fulness of fructifying and persevering grace in Christ.

(3.) There is a fulness of the promises of grace in Jesus. There are many *exceeding great and precious promises*, suited to the various cases and circumstances of the children of God. There never has been a case a believer has been in since the creation of the world, and I may venture to say, there never will be one to the end of it, but there is a promise given forth suitable to it. The covenant of grace is full of these promises; from thence they are transcribed into the gospel, and are spread all over the bible; and what is best of all, *all the promises of God are in Christ, yea, and in him amen, to the glory of God by us^b*; they are all put into his hands for our use, and are all safe and secure in him, who will see to it, that they are all actually and fully accomplish'd; not only the grand

^a 2 Cor. i. 5.

^b Ver. 20.

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promise of life, even of eternal life, which God, that cannot lye, promised before the world began, is in Christ Jesus, but all other promises are in him likewise: So that whosoever are partakers of them, are partakers of them in him, by the gospel.

3. Besides the fulness of nature, and of grace, which is in Christ, there is also the fulness of glory, and of eternal life and happiness. God has not only put the grace of his people, but their glory also into the hands of Christ. Their portion, their inheritance, is reserved for them with him; where it is safe and secure. They are *heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*; so that their estate is sure unto them. As their *life of grace*, so their *life of glory* is *hid with Christ in God*; and *when Christ who is their life shall appear, they shall appear with him in glory*; which will greatly consist in being like to Christ, and seeing him as he is. The saints will be like to Christ, both in body and soul. Their bodies, which are redeemed by his blood, and are members of him, will be *fashioned like unto his glorious body*, in spirituality, immortality, incorruption, power and glory; and *will shine forth as the sun, with brightness and lustre, in the kingdom of their Father*. Their souls will be made

^c Col. iii. 3, 4.

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like to Christ in knowledge and holiness, so far as creatures are capable of. They will then see him as he is, behold his mediatorial glory, view him for themselves, and not another; will be inexpressibly delighted with the excellencies of him, and always continue with him, and be in his presence; *in whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right-hand are pleasures for evermore.* Now all this is secur'd in Christ for the saints; all which they may expect, on this they may depend: for *this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son^a.* Thus all fulness of nature, grace and glory, is in Christ Jesus our Lord. I proceed,

II. To give some account of the nature and properties of this fulness; particularly the fulness of grace. And,

1. It is a very antient one. We are not to suppose that this fulness was first put into Christ's hands upon his ascension to heaven, and session at the right-hand of God; for though he is then said to have received gifts for men, and to have given them to them, because there was then an extraordinary distribution of the gifts and grace of the spirit to the Apostles, yet God

^a 1 John v. 11.

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had given the spirit to Christ without measure long before. The disciples in the days of his flesh, in his state of humiliation, when *the word being made flesh dwelt among them, beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*^e. And long before them *Isaiah* saw this branch of his glory, *his train filling the temple*. All the Old Testament saints looked to him, believed in him, and depended on him, as their living Redeemer; one and all said, *Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength*^f. They were supplied with both, out of this fulness: They drew water with joy, out of *the wells of salvation* in Christ; and were saved by the grace of the Lord Jesus, even as we are. Yea, this matter is to be carried still higher, not only to Old Testament times, or to the foundation of the world, but even into eternity it self. For as early as the elect were given to Christ, so early was grace given to them in him; which was before the world began; as early as the choice of them in him, which was before the foundation of the world, so early were they blessed with all spiritual blessings in him; as early as Christ was the Mediator of the covenant, and that was as early as the covenant it self,

^e John i. 14.

^f Isa. xlv. 24.

which

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which was from everlasting, so early was this fulness of grace deposited with him. *The Lord possessed me*, says *Wisdom*, or *Christ*^s, that is, with this all fulness of grace, *in the beginning of his Ways* of grace; he began with this, before his *works of old*, of creation and providence: *I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was*, as the Mediator of the covenant, entrusted with all the blessings and promises of it. Now this serves greatly to set forth the eternity of Christ's person, the antiquity of his office, and the early regard *Jehovah* had to his chosen people; which strongly expresses his wondrous love, and distinguishing grace towards them.

2. This fulness is a very rich, and an enriching one. 'Tis a fulness of truth, as well as of grace; for Christ is *full of grace and truth*, which the gospel largely opens to us; every truth of which is a pearl of great price, and all together make up an inestimable treasure, more valuable than all the riches of the *Indies*. Now in Christ are laid up *and hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge*ⁿ. What a rich, and enriching stock, fund, and fulness of truth, is there in Jesus Christ! The promises of grace are *precious* ones to all those who

^s Prov. viii. 22, 23.

ⁿ Col. ii. 3.

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Have seen the grace that is in them, to whom they have been opened by the Holy Spirit of promise, and have been by him suitably and seasonably applied; to such they are exceeding precious indeed, they are like *apples of gold in pictures of silver*, rejoiced at more than at a great spoil, and preferred to all the riches of the world; and these, as has been observed, are all in Christ. There are not only riches of grace, but riches of glory in Christ, even *unsearchable riches*, which can never be traced out or told over, which are solid and substantial, satisfying, lasting and durable. Through the poverty of Christ we are enriched with those riches here and hereafter; and this serves much to enhance the glory, excellency, freeness and fulness of his grace: *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich*¹.

3. This fulness is entirely free, with respect to the spring and source of it, the distribution of it, the persons concerned in it, and the manner in which they receive from it. The source and spring of it is the sovereign good-will and pleasure, grace, and love of God. *It pleased the Father to lay it up in Christ: He was not*

¹ 2 Cor. viii. 9.

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induced to it by any thing in his people, or done by them ; for it was laid up in Christ antecedent to their having done good or evil. He could not be influenced by their faith and holiness to do it ; since these are received out of it : *For of his fulness have we all received, and grace for grace^k* ; one grace as well as another, every sort of grace, and faith, and holiness among the rest : Nor could he be moved to it by their good works ; seeing these are fruits of that grace which is derived from it. 'Tis indeed said to be for them that *fear* him, and *trust* in him ; but these phrases are only descriptive of the persons who have received from it, and are made so by it. Not that their fear and faith were the causes or conditions of it : For then the goodness of God would not be so largely display'd in it, as the *Psalmist*¹ suggests ; when he says, *O how great is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee, which thou hast wrought, or appointed, or made for them that trust in thee, before the sons of men!* And as it was freely laid up, 'tis as freely distributed ; our Lord gives it out *liberally, and upbraideth not* ; he gives this *living water* to all that ask it of him, yea, to them that ask it not ; he gives more grace, large measures, fresh supplies of

^k John i. 14.

¹ Psal. xxxi. 19.

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it, to his humble saints, readily and cheerfully, as they stand in need of them; he withholds no good thing from them that walk uprightly. The persons to whom it is given are very unworthy, and yet heartily welcome. Whoever is *thirsty*, and has a *will* to come, may come *and take the water of life freely*; such who have *no money*, nor any thing that is of a valuable consideration, who have neither worth, nor worthiness of their own, may come *and buy wine and milk without money, and without price*. And whereas this fulness of Christ, this well of grace is deep, and we have *nothing to draw with*, faith, the bucket of faith is freely given: That grace, by which we receive of it, is *not of ourselves, it is the gift of God*; and with this we draw water with joy out of the full wells of salvation, which are in Christ Jesus.

4. This fulness is inexhaustible. As *the whole family in heaven and in earth is named of Christ*, so it is maintain'd by him. If by the family in heaven we understand the angels, as it was usual with the *Jews* to call them a family, and the family above; what large measures of

¹⁰ Targum in Cant. i. 15. Zohar in Exod. Fol. 105. Col. 4. Ed. Sulzbac. Talmud Beracot, Fol. 17. v. & passim.

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confirming grace have the elect angels received from Christ! For he is the head of grace to them, as well as to us; *we are compleat in him, which is the head of all principality and powerⁿ.* Or, if by *the family in heaven*, is meant the saints who are gone to glory; what a vast deal of grace has been expended out of this fulness to bring them thither! The grace of our Lord has been abundant, superabundant; it has flow'd, and overflow'd; there has been a pleonasm, a redundancy of it in the case of a single believer. O what must the aboundings of it have been to all the saints in all ages, times and places, since the foundation of the world! And still there is enough for *the family on earth* yet behind. Christ is still *the fountain* of all his gardens, the churches, *a well of living water*, which supplies them all, and *streams from Lebanon*, which sweetly refresh and delight them. His *grace* is still *sufficient* for them, it is like the author of it, who has treasured it up in Christ, it *changes not*; and like the subject in whom it dwells, it is *the same to day, yesterday, and for ever.* I go on,

III. To shew in what sense this fulness may be said to *dwell* in Christ, and what that phrase imports. And,

ⁿ Col. ii. 10.

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1. It expresses the *being* of it in him. It is not barely in intention, in design and purpose, but it is really and actually in him; it is given to him, put into his hands, and laid up in him: And hence it comes to be communicated to the saints; because it is in him, they receive of it, and grace for grace. He is the head in whom it dwells, they are members of him, and so derive it from him. He is theirs, and they are his, and so all that he has belong unto them. His person is theirs, in whom they are accepted with God; his blood is theirs, to cleanse them from all sin; his righteousness theirs, to justify them from it; his sacrifice theirs, to atone for it; and his fulness theirs, to supply all their wants; and out of this they are so filled, as to be said ^o to be *full of the Holy Ghost, full of faith, and full of goodness*: Not that they are so in such sense as Christ is; for this fulness is in him without measure, in them in measure; 'tis in him as an overflowing fountain, but in them as streams from it. This fulness is in Christ, and in no other. The wells of salvation are only in him, there is salvation in no other, 'tis in vain to expect it from any other quarter; no degree of spiritual light and life, grace and holiness, peace, joy and comfort, is to be had

^o Acts vi. 3, 8. Rom. xv. 14.

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elsewhere. Such therefore who neglect, overlook, or forsake this *fountain of living waters, hew out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water* ^v. Wherefore it becomes all who have any knowledge of themselves, any sense of their wants, and views of the fulness of Christ, to apply to him; for whither should any go, but to him who *has the words of eternal life*?

2. It imports the *continuance* of it with him. It is an abiding fulness, and yields a continual, daily supply; believers may go every day to it, and receive out of it; the grace that is in it will be always sufficient for them, even to the end of their days. And to this abiding nature of it, the perpetual dwelling of it in Christ, is owing the saints final perseverance; for, because he lives as full of grace and truth, they do and shall live also. Great reason have believers to be *strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus* ^v. This fulness will abide in Christ unto the end of time, until all the elect are gathered in, and they are filled with grace, and made meet for glory. There will be as much grace, and as large a sufficiency of it for the last believer that is born into the world, as for the first. Besides, there is a fulness of glory in Christ, which will abide in him to

^v *2 Tim. ii. 1.*

all

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all eternity; out of which the saints will be continually receiving glory for glory, as here grace for grace; they will have all their glory from and through Christ then, as they now have all their grace from him and through him.

3. It denotes the *safety* and security of it. Every thing that is in Christ is safe and secure. The persons of God's elect being in him are in the utmost safety, none can pluck them out of his hands. Their grace being there it can never be lost, their glory being there they can never be depriv'd of it. Their *life* both of grace and glory is *hid with Christ in God*, and so out of the reach of men and devils. Christ is the storehouse and magazine of all grace and glory, and a well fortified one; he is a rock, a strong tower, a place of defence, such an one as the gates of hell cannot prevail against. I hasten,

IV. To make it appear, that the being and dwelling of this fulness in Christ is owing to the good-will and pleasure of the Father.

The phrase, *The Father*, is not indeed in the original text, but is rightly supplied by our translators; since he is expressly mention'd in the context, and is spoken of as he who makes the saints meet to be partakers of the heavenly glory, who delivers
from

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from the power and dominion of sin and Satan, and translates into the kingdom of his dear son, *ver.* 12, 13. and as he who by Christ reconciles all things to himself, whether in heaven or in earth, even such who were alienated and enemies in their minds unto him, *ver.* 20. 21. Now,

1. It is owing to the good-will of the Father to his Son, that this fulness dwells in him. Christ was even as mediator, *as one brought up with him, daily his delight, rejoicing always before him*^r, and so he always continued to be; and as an evidence and demonstration of it, he treasured up all fulness in him. This seems to be the import of our Lord's words, when he says^r, *The Father loveth the Son, and hath put all things into his hands*; that is, he hath shewed his love to him, and given a full proof of it, by committing all things to him, to be at his will and disposal. This sense of the words well agrees with the context, which represents Christ in his mediatorial capacity, as exalted by the Father, with this view, *that in all things he might have the preeminence.*

2. It is owing to the good-will of the Father to the elect, that this fulness dwells in Christ; for it is for their sakes, and upon their account, that it is put into the

^r Prov. viii. 30.

^r John iii. 35.

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hands of Christ. God has loved them with an everlasting love; and therefore takes everlasting care of them, and makes everlasting provision for them. They were the objects of his love and delight from everlasting; and therefore he set up Christ as mediator from everlasting, and possessed him with this fulness for them. There was good-will in God's heart towards these sons of men; and therefore it pleased him to take such a step as this, and lay up a sufficient supply for them, both for time and for eternity.

3. It pleased the Father that this fulness should dwell in Christ; because he considered him as the most proper person to trust with it. It is well for us, that it is not put into our own hands at once, but by degrees, as we stand in need of it; it would not have been safe in our own keeping. It is well for us, it was not put into the hands of *Adam*, our first parent, our natural and foederal head, where it might have been lost. It is well for us, it was not put into the hands of angels, who, as they are creatures, and so unfit for such a trust, were also in their creation-state mutable creatures, as the apostacy of many of them abundantly declare. The Father saw that none was fit for this trust but his Son, and therefore it pleased him to commit it to him.

4. It

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4. It is the will and pleasure of God that all grace should come to us through Christ. If God will commune with us, it must be from off the mercy-seat Christ Jesus. If we have any fellowship with the Father, it must be with him through the Mediator. If we have any grace from him who is the God of all grace, it must come to us in this way; for Christ alone is *the way, the truth, and the life*; not only the way of access to God, and acceptance with him, but of the conveyance of all grace, of all the blessings of grace unto us. Now inasmuch as it is the pleasure of the Father that all fulness of nature, grace, and glory, should dwell in Christ the Mediator, this,

(1.) Sets forth the glory of Christ. One considerable branch of Christ's glory, as Mediator, lies in his being *full of grace and truth*; which souls, sensible of their own wants, behold with pleasure. 'Tis this which makes him *fairer than the children of men*, because *grace*, the fulness of it, *is poured into his lips*. 'Tis this which makes him appear to be *white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousands*, and look so lovely, even *altogether lovely*, in the view of all that know him. 'Tis this which makes him so exceeding *precious* to,

* John xiv. 6.

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and so highly valued and esteemed, by all them that *believe*.

(2.) This instructs us where to go for a supply. The *Egyptians*, in the seven years of famine, when they cried to *Pharaoh* for bread, he having set *Joseph* over his store-houses, bids them go to him, saying, *Go unto Joseph; what he saith to you, do*^d. Christ is by his Father made *head over all things to the church*. He is our antitypical *Joseph*, who has our whole stock of grace in his hand: All the treasures of it are hid in him; he has the entire disposal of it, and therefore to him should we go for whatsoever we stand in need of. And this we may be sure of, that there is nothing we want but what is in him; and nothing in him suitable for us, but he will readily and freely communicate to us.

(3.) This directs us to give all the glory of what we have to God, through Christ; For since he is the way of the conveyance of all grace unto us, *by him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips; giving thanks unto his name*^e. It is by the grace of God in Christ, through him and from him, we are what we are; 'tis that which has made us to *differ from another*. We have no-

^d Gen. xli. 55.

^e Heb. xiii. 15.

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thing but what we have in a way of receiving, nothing but what we have received out of the fulness of Christ; and therefore we should not glory, as though we had not received it; But if any of us glory, let us glory in this; that Christ is of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.

1 Cor. i. 30.

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